A Dreadful Creature, Indeed

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A Dreadful Creature, Indeed

by Hannigrammatic

Summary

Will and Hannibal live together long after their ordeal with the Dragon. Together, they adjust to their new lives, and all goes well.

Mostly.

Notes

I just really needed to write something silly and feelgood-sy ♥ Gifted to two of the most caring, amazing people! itsbeautiful, and Wraithsonwings!! Thank you both for being here for me, with words of comfort and lovely pictures of Mads and all the Hannigram anyone could ask for!!

Not beta read!

Living with Hannibal Lecter at first proves to be a challenge.

Will has no preconceived notions of where his personal belongings should go. He drops them where he pleases, shoes toed off inside the door, jacket tossed on the back of the couch, dirty plate laid to rest in the sink, to be washed at a later, currently unknown date. Will doesn't wash his clothes on a certain day of the week, and he doesn't plan when to make his lunch.

Hannibal, however -his shoes are removed and set neatly together, right of the door. His coat is smoothed out and hung religiously in the closet. Every dish used is scrubbed immediately after and left to dry in the air. On Tuesdays, Hannibal washes his colors, Wednesday his whites, and Friday he washes his under garments for the week, though he has more than enough to wear a clean pair every day of the month.

Lunch is prepared and eaten by twelve fifteen, a routine that never serves to fail.

Will doesn't bother to groom himself when he wakes up. He stumbles into the bathroom and splashes water into his face and dries himself afterwards with a cursory scrub. The towel is then tossed aside, sometimes returned haphazardly to the rack, most often landing in a rumple on the sink counter.

Hannibal, on the other hand, wakes up with complete resplendence, hair messy but somehow remaining stylish, pajama bottoms wrinkled only for as long as it takes him to stand before the silken folds fix themselves against his long legs. He disappears into the bathroom for an hour, presumably to tend to his face with the lotions piled neatly on the shelf behind the mirror, or to brush his teeth, an even and equal amount of strokes run over sharp teeth. Next, the shower runs for approximately twenty minutes, and then shuts off, and another forty minutes is spent in silence while Will sits sleep-mussed in the kitchen finally blinking the remnants of sleep from his eyes over a cooling mug of coffee.

They cross paths in the hallway, Hannibal dressed in his day clothes. Will, hair in his face, squinting in the bright sunlight pushing through the wide windows, wears his boxers and not much else. Sometimes a t-shirt, depending on the weather. While he takes his turn in the shower, spending long minutes in the heavy, hot flow of water, Hannibal presses his own coffee and sits at the table with a light breakfast.

Will returns dressed in wrinkly jeans, and a while his shirts and sweaters are of a more expensive and soft caliber, he doesn't bother color coordinating. If it covers him, he's happy.

Breakfast is usually whatever Hannibal has made -he always makes enough for them both-, or plain toast, bread used from the cupboard that Will has taken over, filled with cheap but familiar brands of food. It's the one area in the kitchen that Hannibal avoids dutifully. His frown is felt for ages afterward anytime he witnesses Will rummaging around for a snack during the day, as he generally bypasses lunch. Will, in response, leaves a wrapper on the counter accidentally on purpose.

Living with Hannibal Lecter isn't exactly bad, Will decides.

Because his shoes are picked up and set next to Hannibal's own, not quite touching. His jacket is retrieved with a quiet sigh and hung in the closet with a flourish. His dirty dishes are washed without complaint and the sink rinsed. The towel is folded and returned to the rack, and his wet footprints trailing from the bathroom to the bedroom are wiped away patiently.

When he chose Hannibal, Will wasn't thinking of all the little things, like living together in the same small space. He wasn't thinking about sharing a bed, and the warm weight dipping the mattress when Hannibal joined him after his nightly ritual in the bathroom.

Will wasn't thinking about living in general, much less with the man who had both ruined and made his world anew. He certainly wasn't thinking about Hannibal's favorite color being royal blue, or the fact that his toothbrush would be said color.

Will didn't expect to find ease and comfort in their differing routines. Hannibal was so different in comparison, and yet -it felt right. Normal. Will's mess was Hannibal's need to tidy, which he did constantly. Hannibal's obsessively clean habits were to Will's benefit.

Living with Hannibal Lecter doesn't bother Will, so much as it makes him curious over time.

Just like the man himself.

And Hannibal...well, he's just glad that he lives with Will Graham.

*

The first discrepancy is made by Hannibal, surprisingly.

Will returns home one evening after a long walk. Their home is snuggled into the woods far from civilization, though not impossibly so. The forest surrounding their moderately-sized cottage teems with trails that he is always anxious to discover (or rediscover). No matter the weather, the canopy of thick pine needles above keep him relatively dry, and the monotonous effort of walking is calming to him.

He stomps his boots of excess dirt on the cobblestone path leading up to the porch, which wraps partially around the house. Then, feeling particularly generous, he takes them off at the doorstep and leaves them outside. To say he is surprised when he opens the door would be an understatement -to be quite honest, Will is absolutely baffled, for he immediately trips over *Hannibal's* shoes, apparently removed right inside the doorway. He manages to catch himself before diving nose-first onto the cold, hard floor, letting out an embarrassing, high-pitched sound. And then, he can merely blink at the scene that meets his eyes. Blink and stare.

Hannibal's jacket sits in an untidy pile on the floor, not too far away from his shoes. And the mud, dear god, the mud is *everywhere*, streaking across the floor, dotting the back of the couch, smeared along the wall. At first, Will's heart had skipped a beat, thinking it to be blood. He's never been so thankful to see an awful mess such as he is now.

"Hannibal?" Will calls out hesitantly. The bizarre scene is made even further so by Hannibal's lack of an answer. Silence rings loudly. "Hello?"

In his sudden haste to find answers, Will leaves the door open and charges forward into the house. His feet slip momentarily on the hardwood floor, and he skids around the corner and into the kitchen. Nothing. Next, the bedroom, where the bedding is in a disaster of pillows and blankets, rended and littering their feathers and stuffing all over the place. Will stops, heart racing in a stewing panic. Nothing is as it was or nearly faithfully is, with Hannibal's penchant for glistening surfaces and cleanliness and items arranged at artful angles.

"*Hannibal?!*" Will shouts, officially beginning to worry.

A faint voice answers from his left, towards the bathroom, where the door is closed. Will shakes his head, gaining control of himself as he realizes he'd yet to check there. He would feel ridiculous if he weren't so curious, at this point. And scared, he relents. He has no energy for denial, as he strides purposefully towards the door to yank it open.

And stare, yet again.

Hannibal sits cross-legged on the floor, pants and shirt filthy. One of his socks hangs from the corner of the mirror, where additional splotches of mud smudges the glass. The tiled floor has seen *many* better days. And the bathtub, well…

"What the-" is all that Will can muster to say, the unspoken 'fuck' left to fall in the air soundlessly.

Still, Hannibal frowns over at him, knowing that the inappropriate word had nearly made its way into the already disastrous situation. Will doesn't pay him any mind, as he finally walks into the bathroom entirely to peer at the creature basking in the water of the tub. Said water is nearly black, overfilled and leaking over the sides with the busy movements within.

"Meet Encephalitis," Hannibal grumbles, apparently put-upon. "Our new dog."

"Uhm?"

At this point, Will determines that there is indeed a dog in their bath. A very big, happy dog, who is missing half of one ear, upon closer inspection. Its breed is undeterminable, however. Hannibal's words finally catch up to him, and Will frowns over at the man.

"Are you for real?" he asks with genuine surprise.

"Unfortunately," Hannibal sniffs at the air. "And what a dreadful creature he is."

Encephalitis perks up, as if knowing that he is the topic of conversation. A large tail begins wagging furiously, flinging water at them both. Will laughs, allowing himself to calm down.

"Where the hell did you get him from?" Will questions. He kneels by the side of the tub and offers the dog a hand to sniff and slobber on.

"The backyard, digging up my garden," Hannibal's voice is full of regret. "He doesn't appear to have a collar."

Will sits too, figuring he might as well get comfortable. Encephalitis flops in the water, head sticking out over the side, accepting the soft pats bestowed to him by his new favorite person. One blue eye and one brown eye blink at Will lazily.

“I’m not sure this is even a dog,” Will mumbles.

In fact, he’s certain their new addition is a wolf, or at least a hybrid. Certainly, Encephalitis has the familiar, gangly features, though he’s smaller than his brethren. Hannibal doesn’t appear to notice, or if he does, care. Some affection has developed between them, especially for the man to forgo his need for a spotless home. Indeed, Hannibal looks at the dog with a warmth in his brown eyes that Will has often seen directed at himself.

As if on cue, the man regards Will at length, one pale brow raised as if in question. For a long moment, they merely stare at each other, unspoken words tangling in the air between them. Will’s chest is warm with the realization that Hannibal had gotten him -them- a dog. Hannibal’s stomach gurgles unpleasantly as he waits for a reaction to this utterly uncharacteristic afternoon. Both men are quiet until Encephalitis lets out a booming, excited bark.

“Don’t worry, beast,” Hannibal responds. “You are anything but forgotten in this moment.”

Water splashes Hannibal’s face, dripping down his sharp cheekbone. Will can no longer hold himself in, and he begins to laugh from the belly, loud and amused and endlessly pleased with everything.

“I love him,” Will finally says, between fits of giggles. “And I love you, Hannibal.”

Hannibal’s smile is wide and nearly breaks Will’s heart with how fucking happy the man looks. They meet halfway for an embrace that is both loving and uncomfortably tight, one that lasts a mere twenty seconds before their new family member barks and splashes and jumps out of the tub to lather them both in his own version of wet, heavy, tail-wagging love.

Living with Hannibal Lecter makes Will happy, in the end.

The addition of Encephalitis, whose name still has Will rolling his eyes, merely adds a very furry, exuberant layer to their new life together.

Hannibal is just happy to have Will Graham in his life. He couldn’t ask for anything more.

Well...mostly, he reflects, while the breath is knocked out of him by the large paws that land in his lap. Hannibal watches mournfully as his book soars away. Big, soulful mismatched eyes stare at him, single intact ear perked as a big head tilts expectantly to the side.

Hannibal sighs, before petting the admittedly endearing creature.

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